United Nations A/60/PV.38

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

38th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 26 October 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Hamidon (Malaysia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 46 and 44 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Note by the Secretary-General (A/60/275)

Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children

Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/207)

Mr. Nguyen Duy Chien (Viet Nam): The delegation of Viet Nam would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report under agenda item 44, on follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*A/60/207*).

The report shows clearly that much work remains to be done to achieve a world fit for children. It is our conviction that in order to succeed in all four goal areas of the Plan of Action adopted at the General Assembly's twenty-seventh special session (*resolution S-27/2, annex*), concerted efforts are needed at both the national and international levels.

National-level efforts include intensifying actions to develop and implement national targets that complement and reinforce those of the Plan of Action and the Millennium Declaration (*resolution 55/2*) and the increased mobilization of resources to meet those targets.

Efforts at the international level include support, assistance and cooperation among countries and between countries and the United Nations system. Such international efforts are important for helping countries with scarce resources, especially developing countries, to focus their commitments and funding on attaining the agreed targets. Therefore, adequate attention should also be given to the international dimension of implementing the Plan of Action, namely, the need for stepping up efforts aimed at fulfilling the commitments under section C of the Plan of Action.

The Vietnamese consider children to be the happiness of the family and the future of the nation and the world. A better future for all nations and the entire world can be ensured only through adequate investment in the children of today. Therefore, we consider the protection and care of children to be a shared responsibility of the State, society and the family.

As the first country in Asia and the second country in the world to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Viet Nam has developed and improved legal and institutional frameworks for the promotion and the protection of the rights of the child. In 1991, the National Assembly of Viet Nam adopted

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the Law on Child Protection, Care and Education. The National Assembly's Committee on Children is actively working with relevant ministries and agencies, in particular the Government's Committee on Population, Family and Children, to ensure full implementation of legislative instruments.

Viet Nam remains firmly committed to the principles and the objectives of the Declaration and Plan of Action of the twenty-seventh special session and continues to attach great importance to full implementation of the goals enshrined in it. I will mention two areas of crucial importance for Vietnamese children today.

The first area is the promotion of healthy lives. Among the four major goal areas, health care for children is among the top priorities of Viet Nam. Health care activities in the country are implemented through national targeted programmes on the prevention of dangerous diseases, on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and on food hygiene and safety. Within those programmes, a number of projects have been implemented for the direct benefit of children, including programmes on extensive immunization, the prevention of malnutrition and safe child-rearing.

In line with Millennium Development Goal 4 and the goals of the twenty-seventh special session, Viet Nam's child mortality rate has been considerably reduced. The under-five mortality rate went down from 58 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 42 per 1,000 births in 2001, and dropped further to 31.5 per 1,000 births in 2004. The child mortality rate for infants under one year of age declined from 44.4 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 21 per 1,000 births in 2003, and fell further to 18 per 1,000 births in 2004. That has been achieved by improving maternal health, including the elimination of neonatal tetanus, better immunization coverage, the broad distribution of vitamin A and the provision of free medical examinations for the poor. Today, 95 per cent of ethnic minority children in Viet Nam have been vaccinated against six diseases through extensive immunization programmes.

Currently, further concrete measures are being taken to address the gaps among regions of the country, as well as to further reduce malnutrition and injury-related child mortality, the latter being the greatest cause of child mortality today.

Equally important is the second area, the provision of quality education. While Viet Nam's per capita gross domestic product remains low, we are sparing no effort to provide basic education. Spending on training and education amounted to 15 per cent of the State budget in 2000 and 17.4 per cent in 2004, while spending on making primary and secondary education universal totalled 52.6 per cent of all education spending. Various strategies, programmes and plans have been developed and are being implemented, such as the development strategy for training and education for 2001-2010 and the national action plan for Education for All for 2003-2015. Their goals are compatible with those of the Millennium Development Goals and the Plan of Action of the twenty-seventh special session.

At present, almost 94.5 per cent of Vietnamese children are enrolled in primary schools, and the overall rate for girls is only a fraction of a percentage point less than that of boys. The enrolment rate for girls at all levels of education has generally risen in the period 2001-2004, with no significant differences between regions.

Efforts have been made to address educational disparities between regions in the country, especially relating to ethnic children. The boarding school system, which provides free education and accommodation for ethnic minority students, is being expanded. At present, there are seven national boarding schools for such students. Enrolment of school-age ethnic minority children has increased to between 85 and 90 per cent. Many provinces have a policy giving priority to the admission of ethnic minority children at junior and senior secondary schools. One hundred per cent of ethnic minority pupils are admitted into grades 6 through 10 at public schools. It is also the policy of the Government to provide free education, including notebooks and textbooks, for ethnic minority children, and priority is attached to their admission into universities and colleges. Six sets of textbooks and curricula have been completed in eight widely used ethnic languages.

The Secretary-General has correctly noted in his report on the follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on children that most of the goals of "A world fit for children" will be achieved only through a major intensification of action for disadvantaged children and families. Our current national focus is in line with that recommendation. At

present, the National Committee on Population, Family and Children is completing a strategy for the protection of the child for the period 2006 to 2010. Also, under the Vision 2020 programme, the strategy will devote maximum attention to the 2.35 million children living in conditions of special hardship, namely, those in rural, mountainous and remote areas, ethnic children, children from poor households, orphans, disabled children and others. The strategy is aimed at providing an enabling legal environment, a network and a mechanism for coordination among the relevant ministries and agencies, the family, schools and the community for the implementation of policies and programmes for the protection and the care of children, with special attention to children facing special hardships. It is expected that the Government will approve the strategy by the end of the year.

Viet Nam has a strong commitment and has made great efforts to promote, protect and care for children, and it is increasingly allocating new resources for children's affairs. However, as a developing country, Viet Nam still has a low level of economic development and faces certain practical constraints in terms of resources in a number of areas. In that regard, we take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to UNICEF and other international partners for their valuable support and assistance for our endeavours.

Mrs. Asmady (Indonesia): The delegation of Indonesia, like many other Member States, is concerned about the pace of progress in implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits. In that light, Indonesia appreciates the updated report of the Secretary-General (*A/60/275*) on the role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of those outcomes.

The Council has a central role to play in promoting the coordination of those outcomes throughout the United Nations system. We are troubled that the pace of implementation is slow, and we urge the specialized agencies and national Governments to continue to cooperate with the Council to ensure full implementation of outcomes. Clearly, there is need to enhance the efficiency and the effectiveness of action taken to achieve the outcome goals.

Indonesia also notes that the report of the Secretary-General (*A/60/207*) on the progress made in implementation of the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly on children — better known as "A world fit for children" (*resolution S-27/2*) — presents a mixed picture of such progress. This, the third follow-up report, will serve to keep the fire of enthusiasm burning on behalf of children. From the Secretary-General's report, we note that an increasing number of countries have formulated national plans of action to fulfil the commitments made at the special session. Priority issues for children are becoming more and more integrated into mainstream national planning processes. That augurs well for the future.

For its part, in 2004 Indonesia adopted the National Programme for Indonesian Children 2015. That plan has served as a catalyst for action on behalf of Indonesia's children. Just one year after its implementation, the plan has already had an impact on the health and physical security of the nation's children, who are now afforded greater protection from abuse, exploitation and violence. The plan has also led to action to combat infections among children and to ensure they receive a sound diet. Vaccine-preventable diseases are being resolutely addressed, with special attention being given to polio and measles, which have begun to resurge in Indonesia. With the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization, the Government of Indonesia has put programmes into effect in conjunction with a national immunization week. Some 24 million children have benefited.

Other aspects of children's physical well-being are being addressed as well. There are now a number of nutrition programmes in place intended to deal with protein-energy malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies among children. Specially targeted are children under five from poor families and poor pregnant women. Those programmes have served to reduce both maternal and newborn mortality rates.

Illiteracy is also being attacked. The Government of Indonesia has taken to heart the maxim, "a healthy mind in a healthy body". To that end, acting in concert with UNICEF and UNESCO, the Government of Indonesia has set up a number of creative learning communities for children designed to make the learning experience a thoroughly enjoyable one. Those institutions benefit from transparent management and enjoy the active support of their surrounding communities. The creative learning programme has expanded with incredible rapidity. In 2000, 79 schools offered this type of quality education. By 2004, there

were 1,326 schools involved, reaching close to a quarter of a million children.

Those breakthroughs represent merely the beginning for Indonesia. We are determined to maintain the momentum that we have generated. But we are not so narrowly focused as to ignore what is happening elsewhere within our region. We are therefore happy that regional mechanisms are ensuring political support for the goals of the special session, and we would be more than willing to share experiences and best practices with our neighbours.

Mrs. Núñez de Odremán (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): With regard to agenda item 46, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to reiterate its commitment as a Member of the United Nations, to participate fully in the study of the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. We believe they reflect the international community's will to confront the serious problems of humanity with a view to achieving sustainable development.

However, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela does not consider it legitimate that the outcome document of the 2005 world summit be invoked with regard to the current item. It is well known that our country has sent a letter to the President of the General Assembly calling for the Legal Counsel of the United Nations, as an office under the Secretary-General, to be consulted with a view to evaluating and restoring the legitimacy and credibility of the outcome document. We made the request based on the following considerations, among others: first, did the negotiation and approval process used in connection with that document conform with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter, the rules of the General Assembly and procedural norms?; secondly, was the summit outcome document's reform agenda, as incorporated in the related draft resolution, truly approved by consensus, in view of the explicit rejection of its legitimacy and the express condemnation of the document by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela?; and, thirdly, if we conclude that the consensus required for the adoption of the document did not prevail, what value can we attach to any negotiations based on it?

Until a reply is given to its request which was submitted in virtue of its prerogatives as a sovereign nation and a full Member of the General Assembly, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela feels that any activity relating to the implementation or application of the outcome document must remain in abeyance.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I call on the observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to give his statement.

Mr. Gospodinov (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): Let me start directly with one of our major challenges today — HIV/AIDS and children. At the sixth Pan African Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, held in Algiers in September 2004, African Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies adopted a plan of action containing several objectives. In particular, it calls for a serious commitment to fight stigma and discrimination faced by people living with HIV/AIDS and children orphaned by HIV/AIDS; the need to fight the pandemic through education; and the need to provide psychological support for affected children, their families and communities. Those three objectives reflect to a large degree what we are discussing today.

In southern Africa alone, Red Cross Societies, through their networks of volunteers, are currently reaching 50,000 homecare-based people in need, many of them children. They aim to triple that figure by 2010. Their activities include strengthening the capacity of community and family caregivers to provide homecare, referrals, psychological support and assistance in creating self-help projects and food gardens. Last year alone, in the same region, Red Cross staff and volunteers reached 1.4 million people with messages on HIV/ADS prevention. A few weeks ago we launched an emergency appeal, requesting $30 million to assist 1.5 million people facing grave food insecurity in seven countries in southern Africa — namely, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The aim is to provide food, agricultural support and safe drinking water to vulnerable people in these countries, where millions of children and young people are paying a high price, very often with their lives.

Also in Africa, Red Cross Societies, with support from the International Federation, are piloting a service delivery model on access to care and antiretroviral therapy for people living with HIV/AIDS. The pilot project is being carried out in six countries: Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Access to antiretroviral therapy is considered a priority for our members in Africa. The greatest service we can provide to any child is to keep his or her parents alive, and vice versa. Is there anything more important for a parent than to keep his or her child alive? That is exactly what we are trying to help with.

Furthermore, the support for orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS is another one of our main priorities in Africa. Guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and our own policies, we have developed a regional Red Cross programme strategy for orphans in southern Africa which advocates holistic support to ensure that all needs of orphans and other vulnerable children are met and that their rights are upheld. Holistic support, the way we understand it, includes food and shelter, plus psychological, social and educational backing. With this in mind, our volunteers work with entire families and build strong relationships with the children who come to rely on the volunteers after their parents have passed away. Currently, Red Cross volunteers are supporting 90,000 orphan children in Southern Africa, although our aim is to reach a much larger number by 2010.

While the African continent is particularly affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, we at the IFRC are also working on HIV/AIDS response and prevention globally, including in Asia, Latin America and parts of Europe. Over the last year, we have stepped up our peer education programmes, which have proven successful in schools, prisons, youth clubs and among high-risk populations such as truck drivers and commercial sex workers. Community awareness campaigns, the promotion of condom use and the distribution of educational materials were also expanded. One month from now, on 1 December — World AIDS Day — a media-friendly anti-stigma event, called "Come closer ...", will be launched worldwide, aimed at millions of youth and involving people living with HIV/AIDS. This is only one of our many tools for a broad advocacy plan.

We are aware that this monumental task requires equally monumental efforts and broad partnerships. We work closely with the whole United Nations family, especially UNICEF, whose campaign, launched yesterday, we strongly support. We also work closely with the World Health Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Food Programme, as well as with Governments and agencies, such as the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, the World Bank, the OPEC Fund and many private corporations. This is crucial for facilitating children's access to antiretroviral therapy and treatment of opportunistic infections.

We also believe that partnerships with people living with HIV/AIDS and their organizations are a priority. Our member Red Cross societies in Southern Africa are also increasing their support to carers, including the grandparents and guardians of orphaned children, children who are caring for their sick parents and, inevitably, our own Red Cross volunteers who work tirelessly with people living with HIV/AIDS and with their families and who, sadly, are also living with the virus. The International Federation is seeking ways to ensure that they have access to health care and psychological support as well.

There is another important reason why we see partnerships as so vital. The caregiver-patient ratio continues to rise. This forces us to recruit and train more volunteers in order to reduce the ratio to acceptable levels of one caregiver to 10 patients. Volunteers work for free, but their training and motivation cost money and need continuous support. We urge all stakeholders to invest more in human resource development. Volunteers should not be taken for granted as free humanitarian power that does not need investment. Our national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which under domestic and international law are auxiliaries to the public authorities, stand ready to work with United Nations Member Governments to bring action forward on this vital issue.

When tsunamis, hurricanes or earthquakes strike and cause destruction, we act swiftly — at least in most cases. We save children and parents alike. Sometimes one gets the feeling that sudden natural disasters push us to act within minutes or hours, while with long-lasting, even predictable, disasters such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, we are not fast and generous enough. HIV/AIDS kills and affects more people than do earthquakes and hurricanes combined.

Looking at newspaper ads, we are encouraged to adopt a highway, a lake, a forest, a street dog or an elephant in a zoo. That is fine; it is correct and noble. However, to strengthen our global and coordinated actions to combat HIV/AIDS, maybe the time has come to individually and specifically adopt villages in Africa and elsewhere so that someday we may say that not only were the adopted forest, the street dog or the malnourished elephant in the zoo rescued, but that, child by child, village by village, or country by country, a generation was saved. Then, and only then, can we focus on saving more lakes, more rivers and more elephants. Children, however, must be our ultimate priority.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 44 and 46.

Agenda item 60

Global road safety crisis

(a) Note by the Secretary-General (A/60/181 and Corr.1)

(b) Draft resolution (A/60/L.8)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Oman to introduce draft resolution A/60/L.8.

Mr. Al-Hinai (Oman): Since our discussion on road safety in this very Hall last April 2004, another 1.2 million people have been killed on our roads worldwide, and another 20 to 50 million have been injured or disabled. These are startling figures. Yet, they have not made headlines like, say, a plane crash would.

The global road safety crisis is a modern epidemic of extraordinary proportions. The numbers are rapidly getting worse, and the World Health Organization has predicted that by 2020 road traffic deaths and injuries will exceed HIV/AIDS as a burden of death and disability.

What is most alarming is that this crisis is predictable and preventable. These deaths and injuries are predictable, because they rise as the numbers of cars on the road increase. They are preventable, because we have the tools and the knowledge to prevent these deaths. What is most frightening is that few recognize that this is an epidemic in the making and that it can be prevented. Fatalism is our biggest problem, causing individuals to look at road traffic injuries as just accidents — acts that are unpredictable and therefore unpreventable.

2004 was a year of much activity as the United Nations and the international community tried to raise awareness of the problem. The World Health Organization (WHO) dedicated World Health Day to road safety and, together with the World Bank, launched the World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention. The General Assembly adopted resolution 58/289, which invited WHO to act as coordinator for road safety issues within the United Nations system. The World Health Organization, with the support of the United Nations regional commissions and a number of stakeholders, held a series of meetings, a result of which is their excellent input in the Secretary-General's report, contained in document A/60/181.

With the active participation and support of the United Nations regional commissions in the process, countries and organizations are pushing forward towards greater international cooperation. Regional efforts are under way in Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America.

We have come a long way since the road safety item was included in the agenda of the General Assembly in 2003. There is still much more that we can do.

We need to set our goals and monitor our performance. While we speak of the global road safety crisis and the predicted near doubling of road traffic deaths by the year 2020, we can also see this as an opportunity to turn the rising numbers around. If we can keep the death toll from rising to predicted levels over the next 15 years, we can save more than five million lives.

We need to collect meaningful data and strengthen information systems, so as to help Governments view road safety as an important investment.

We need to build the capacity to manage road safety systems, with a focus on prevention of injuries, treatment of injuries and rehabilitation of the injured.

We need to pass and enforce legislation that will help make vehicles, roadways and drivers safer.

We need to support research that illuminates both the causes and consequences of road traffic injuries in low- and middle-income countries and we must share the information that we generate.

Most important is our need to generate political will. Road safety is no accident. It requires commitment at the highest levels of leadership.

Oman, under the wise leadership of His Majesty the Sultan, has, in the last 35 years, seen its road network grow from 10 kilometres in 1970 to thousands of kilometres, connecting all regions from the north to the south, and from the east to the west. Inevitably, along with the increase in the number of vehicles on our roads, the collisions and crashes leading to deaths and injuries also increased. Improving safety on our roads became a top priority for the Government of Oman.

Legislation was enacted and a national road safety agency was established, whose task was to update comprehensive regulations and create a registry to obtain detailed information on the causes of collisions and crashes, with the aim of reducing the number of accidents to a minimum. A year ago, the State Council held a forum on road safety. The two-day forum was also attended by members of the Shura Council and the Royal Oman Police, which is responsible for implementing road safety regulations and for the prevention of road traffic injuries.

Oman's initiative to raise global awareness about road safety is based on its own experience and realization that the problem can only get worse if nothing is done about it. We need to intensify our efforts to raise worldwide awareness of the road safety crisis and its consequences.

My delegation has, throughout this process, worked very closely with other delegations, as well as with a number of other organizations. In addition, from the time the delegation of Oman accepted the General Assembly's invitation to act as coordinator on road safety issues within the United Nations system, the World Health Organization, together with the United Nations regional commissions, has been a reliable and dedicated partner.

The World Health Organization has hosted meetings of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration, whose outcomes are contained in the report of the Secretary-General. Other important players in the endeavour are the global road safety steering committee under the secretariat of the Task Force for Child Survival and Development, the FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society and the World Bank, who have all given me invaluable support and encouragement.

In this context, I am pleased to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/60/L.8, on which my delegation has held a number of informal consultations with other Member States to arrive at a consensus. The draft resolution builds on the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/60/181) and in the World Health Organization's World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention, and its main points are as follows:

First, it expresses its concern at the increase in traffic fatalities and injuries worldwide and reaffirms the importance of addressing global safety issues through international cooperation.

Secondly, it encourages Member States to adhere to relevant United Nations conventions of 1949 and 1968 and recognizes the work being undertaken by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in the elaboration of a substantial package of amendments to the 1968 convention.

Thirdly, it invites Member States to implement the recommendations of the World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention and to establish national agencies to develop a national action plan to reduce road traffic injuries.

Fourthly, my Government welcomes the decision by the World Health Organization and the United Nations regional commissions to jointly organize the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week, which would serve as a platform for raising awareness globally about road safety issues.

Lastly, it is unfortunate that road traffic deaths and injuries are not treated as seriously as other disasters and, sadly, the victims do not receive the same respect and compassion as other victims of violence. They end up being statistics and data. But behind those numbers are real people — sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, parents and friends. Let me give you just a few examples.

Faisal — A young physician who had just completed his post-graduate studies, sustained serious injuries in a road crash and, after seven months on a

respirator, had to relearn how to speak, walk and eat. Sadly, he will never practise medicine again.

Nauf was 4 years old when she was hit by a car while crossing the street and was paralysed from the neck down. She was brought to a hospital and put on a respirator to help her breathe. Ten years later, she remains dependent on the respirator. Nauf speaks two or three languages in addition to her mother tongue, mainly as a result of her communication with medical personnel.

Aron was an aspiring physician who had just completed his final year of medical school. He was riding a bus on a winding road when, as a result of speeding, the bus went out of control and overturned. Aron and 22 others died that day.

While Lyndon was on vacation with his family, his car crashed, and a month later he died from his injuries. His family survived but will need to learn to live without their main source of support.

Mansoor, aged 26, was riding a motorbike through an intersection when he was hit head-on by a van whose driver had run several red lights. He was killed instantly. The court imposed a small fine on the driver. Mansoor was not even mentioned in the judgement.

The World Day of Remembrance was initiated about 11 years ago by a number of non-governmental organizations and has since been embraced by organizations in various parts of the world. It is a day when we remember all those killed and injured in road crashes and express our thanks to the emergency services who are always the first to arrive at the site of a road crash, to the medical personnel whose task it is to revive, treat and rehabilitate the injured, and to the families who suffer grief because of the loss of a loved one and who unselfishly provide love and care to the injured.

The World Day of Remembrance is a chance to remember people like Faisal, Nauf, Aron, Lyndon, Mansoor and thousands of others, and to recognize the ways in which their deaths or injuries have affected individuals, families and communities. Operative paragraph 10 of the draft resolution invites Member States to recognize the third Sunday in November of every year as the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims.

The additional sponsors of draft resolution A/60/L.8 are: Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malta, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Slovenia, Spain, the Sudan, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Zambia.

I commend draft resolution A/60/L.8 for adoption by the General Assembly.

Mr. Al-Kaabi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like, on behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, to thank President Eliasson for his valuable efforts in directing the activities of the current session. I am confident that he will ably lead our deliberations on this important agenda item. I also wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his important report (*A/60/181*).

Improving road safety is undoubtedly a crucial and urgent issue that requires immediate and decisive action. Traffic accidents are a leading cause of death among those aged 15 to 44. Each year, they kill more than a million people and disable several million others, resulting in tremendous human and material losses and negatively affecting the social and economic conditions of individuals and communities, particularly in developing countries, which are striving to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The United Arab Emirates commends the efforts of the United Nations and its various organs to address the global road safety crisis and recognizes that the implementation of road safety programmes in many developing and poor countries requires adequate financial resources. We therefore believe it imperative to strengthen international cooperation in all its forms, especially through the Organization's regional commissions and specialized agencies, in order to support the efforts of those countries and to provide them with the financial and technical assistance they need to build their capacities in the area of road safety.

Owing to the swift pace of development in the United Arab Emirates and to our easy access to automobiles as the preferred means of transport, we, like other countries, have seen an increase in the number of road accidents, especially among young people. Bearing in mind the devastating impact of such accidents on our society, the authorities of the United Arab Emirates have undertaken measures to address this serious crisis, including adoption and implementing international resolutions on road safety and taking the domestic measures necessary to reduce traffic accidents by 5.5 per cent annually. Those measures include the following.

First, in the area of preventive measures, we are building and maintaining a network of roads that conforms to international standards, using the latest technology in terms of traffic lights, road signs and instructions, cameras and traffic control radar systems. We are adopting driver safety laws establishing speed limits and a minimum driving age of 18, requiring the use of seat belts and setting out strict requirements for driver's licences. We are providing security officers of both genders with the necessary training to enable them to work on the police force and in traffic control, and we are increasing their presence on the roads.

We are promoting traffic awareness among individuals in society, especially among students in primary school, through media, educational lectures, contests, prizes and participation in national and regional conferences and annual events on traffic. We are also applying higher technical standards and specifications for vehicles to ensure their safety and operating condition.

Secondly, with regard to enforcement, we are instituting strict penalties for violators of traffic laws. They include fines, the suspension or revocation of driver's licenses and imprisonment. Stricter traffic laws and regulations are also being enforced on our roads.

Thirdly, with regard to rehabilitation, we are providing victims of road accidents with emergency and long-term medical care and rehabilitation services at hospitals and specialized centres.

Moreover, the Government is considering other transportation alternatives in order to reduce the use of private cars on roads as much as possible. That includes developing and putting in place new means of mass transportation in order to reduce traffic jams and accidents.

In conclusion, we hope that our deliberations will contribute to enhancing international cooperation in the area of combating this serious scourge in both developing and developed countries.

Mr. Ng (Singapore): I would like to express our deep appreciation to the delegation of Oman for its continuing efforts to bring the growing crisis in road safety to the attention of the international community. Singapore welcomes this opportunity to discuss the road safety crisis and supports the initiatives introduced at this and other global forums to tackle the crisis.

When the Jet Blue Airbus 320 landed safely at Los Angeles International Airport on 22 September, after having had trouble with its landing gear, our hearts rejoiced, as we felt for the passengers on board. Unfortunately, more often than not, we read headlines of plane crashes that kill hundreds of people. Disaster and investigative teams are activated and experts are mobilized to manage the aftermath of the tragedy, which often receives much attention in the subsequent days and weeks.

However, the higher number of deaths from road traffic injuries receives comparatively much less attention. Such incidents do not occur occasionally, but daily everywhere. Motor transport is no doubt viewed as one of the greatest inventions the world has seen. It has become a convenient element of modern life, but it is also one of life's greatest threats. According to the *2004 World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention*, which was produced jointly by the World Health Organization and the World Bank, more than 3,000 people die from road traffic injuries every day around the world, about 10 times more than any possible airplane crash. More alarmingly, such deaths in low-income and middle-income countries account for about 85 per cent of the total. According to the same report, if appropriate action is not taken, by 2020 road traffic injuries will climb to become the world's third leading contributor to disease and injury.

Road traffic accidents, and road fatalities in particular, remain a chronic problem in our world today. Each traffic accident is a terrible tragedy for the families and friends of the victims, as well as a loss to society. Apart from the death toll and human costs, the approximate annual worldwide financial cost of road accidents is estimated at $500 billion. That does not factor in the costs incurred by insurance and other

industries. It is further estimated that the costs of medical assistance, infrastructure-building, investigation and other expenses incurred as a result of road accidents amount to between 1 per cent and 3 per cent of a country's gross national product. That is significantly more than the total overseas development assistance provided to developing countries. While high-income countries are expected to continue to improve their road safety situation, by 2020 road traffic deaths are predicted to rise by more than 80 per cent in developing and transitional countries, especially in South Asia. Most of those who are killed in motor accidents are men under the age of 44 years, who are very often the sole breadwinners for their families.

More needs to be done to reverse those highly disturbing trends. The international community needs to build on the efforts and momentum of last year's World Health Day, which was dedicated to road safety, and accelerate our collaborative efforts to reduce traffic-accident-related injuries and deaths. It is only with greater awareness that we can address the crisis individually and collectively.

Everyone has a responsibility to keep our roads safe. In that regard, Singapore has always been active in the promotion of road safety, and has one of the lowest fatal and injury accident rates in the world. However, challenges remain, due to our aging population and the increase in the number of vehicles on our roads. In the last two decades, the Government has taken numerous steps to improve road safety in Singapore. With assistance from the Asian Development Bank, the Government of Singapore has developed a national road safety action plan. That action plan involves strategic collaboration between Government agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, and is aimed at enhancing road safety through a five-E's approach: encouragement, emergency preparedness, engineering, education and enforcement.

In the area of encouragement, the plan involves setting up an effective road safety executive structure and a multidisciplinary working group to make strategic changes aimed at enhancing road safety in Singapore. The objective is to expand and strengthen coordination and participation by various major stakeholders.

Similarly, emergency preparedness is being given renewed focus, which involves better integration of efforts to provide swift and relevant medical intervention at traffic-accident sites.

In the area of engineering, experts from Singapore's land transport authority use up-to-date and comprehensive data systems and accident-trend analysis to incorporate safe practices into the planning, designing and managing of roads. Road conditions must meet the highest standards of maintenance. Advance equipment, such as the Expressway Monitoring Advisory System, working together with the broadcast media, provide real-time traffic alerts to motorists. The various engineering initiatives are financially costly, but critical in efforts to reduce potentially fatal accidents.

It is equally important for automobile manufacturers to constantly review their engineering processes and designs in the interest of promoting road safety. That was perhaps best summed up by none other than Mr. Katsuaki Watanabe, President of the Toyota Motor Corporation, when he introduced Toyota's new management team in June this year:

> "My dream of car making, for instance when it comes to the environment, is to make cars that can cross the American continent on just one tankful of gas, or cars that make the atmosphere cleaner the more we use them; and, in terms of safety, cars that do not cause accidents, cars that do not injure people or cars that make people healthier when they drive".

The fourth "E" relates to education. Road safety education is important for inculcating the correct mindset and road behaviour in all road users. Education is not just simply teaching the traffic rules, but making sure that the concept of road safety is conveyed clearly and that it is internalized. With good education, good daily habits are formed, which could save many lives on the road. The importance of road safety has to be ingrained in everyone. Over the years, the Government of Singapore, working with the private sector, has launched campaigns, road-safety talks, exhibitions and even videos promoting road safety. Despite the increased public awareness today, we cannot rest on our laurels.

The fifth, and final, "E" — enforcement — forms an integral part of road-safety management. Irresponsible driving leads to traffic accidents more than any other cause. Tough rules and penalties are required to deter traffic offenders. At times, the

Government of Singapore is obliged to take strong enforcement action to change the mindsets of road users and make them think twice before engaging in reckless or dangerous road behaviour. Irresponsible road users in Singapore face fines, the suspension of driving privileges and even jail terms.

With regard to excessive speeding, for example, statistics have shown over the years that speeding is the number one killer. To combat that situation, tough and clear laws were enacted a few years ago, whereby speed demons — that is, those who go over the speed limit by more than 40 kilometres per hour — are charged in court. They also stand to lose their licences for committing such offences. Mobile speed-laser cameras have also been introduced to enhance detection of those who speed. When our traffic police stepped up its speed enforcement in the middle of last year, it raised some public anxiety as to whether the police were being overzealous in their efforts. But, with good public education and assurances from the police, motorists do realize that the objective of the exercise was to save lives, especially those of vulnerable road users such as motorcyclists and pedestrians, and in particular those of children and elderly persons.

Our hectic modern-day lifestyles often breed in us a spirit of impatience. That impatience will cause some to drive inconsiderately, others to overtake dangerously and yet others to speed excessively. Society has always retained a basic faith in the power of education to change human behaviour. As long as this is so, and as long as undesirable human behaviour is an important cause of traffic accidents, education, complemented by enforcement measures, adequate infrastructures and sound collaborative efforts, will be the key to reducing road casualties.

Mr. Poojary (India): At the outset, we wish to thank the Secretary-General for his note transmitting the report prepared by the World Health Organization on the global road safety crisis, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/289 of 14 April 2004. We would also like to express our appreciation to the delegation of Oman for its continued efforts in support of this agenda item.

The report informs us that road traffic incidents are a major public health problem and a leading cause of death and injury around the world. Each year, nearly 1.2 million people die and millions more are injured or disabled as a result of road crashes, mostly in urban areas of developing countries. In many instances, road accidents rob poor families of their breadwinner. In addition to the enormous economic and social costs to individuals, families and communities, road traffic injuries place a heavy burden on national health services, in particular those of developing countries.

India, as a country that has a vast road network of more than 3 million kilometres and where road traffic is growing at the rate of 7 to 10 per cent per annum, attaches great importance to addressing the problem of road traffic safety and to reducing the adverse consequences of traffic accidents. Indian roads carry 80 per cent of the country's passengers and 60 per cent of its freight traffic. The highways, which constitute only 2 per cent of the road network, carry 40 per cent of that traffic.

For many years, India lagged behind many countries in the development of highways. However, in recent years, a concerted effort has been undertaken through new institutional arrangements and improved highway engineering to advance the highway infrastructure in India.

Under the National Highway Development Project (NHDP), 14,279 kilometres of national highways are to be converted to four to six lanes, at a total estimated cost of 6.5 trillion rupees or approximately $151 billion, at 2004 prices. That project involves, first, the Golden Quadrilateral, connecting the four major cities of Delhi in the north, Mumbai in the west, Chennai in the south, and Calcutta in the east; secondly, the north-south and east-west corridors connecting Srinagar in the north to Kanyakumari in the south, and Silchar in the east to Porbandar in the west; and, thirdly, port connectivity and other projects.

The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna — the Prime Minister's Rural Road Plan — was launched in December 2000 to provide rural connectivity to unconnected habitations in rural areas by the end of the tenth Plan period, in 2007. The rehabilitation and upgrading of about 10,000 kilometres of existing national highways to a four-lane dual carriageway configuration on a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) basis is proposed under phase III of the Project.

An accelerated North-East Road Development Project is also under consideration for the development of roads in the northeastern region. The fourth phase of

the NHDP is a new initiative meant to provide balanced and equitable distribution in terms of improving and widening the highway network throughout the country. That will be done by upgrading 21,000 kilometres of single-lane roads to two-lane highways and by constructing paved shoulders.

We believe that this enhanced focus on improving the road and highway infrastructure in the country will not only help the development of the country but also lead to a reduction in road congestion, which will help reduce the number of accidents on the road. We hope and believe that, eventually, such an improved road infrastructure will also serve to improve road safety in the country.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has been entrusted with the responsibility of formulating policies for road safety in India. It compiles data on road accidents and prepares annual road safety plans. The various initiatives being implemented include publicity campaigns, grants in aid to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for organizing road safety programmes and creating awareness; a national highway accident relief service scheme; refresher training for heavy-vehicle drivers; and the setting up of model driving training schools.

Publicity programmes include the printing of calendars and advertisements on the radio, on television and in other mass media. A road safety week is organized annually to raise awareness of these issues. The sixteenth Road Safety Week was observed throughout India from 3 to 9 January 2005, with the theme "Road Safety Is No Accident", which is also the theme chosen by the World Health Organization in declaring 2004 as Road Safety Year.

To generate awareness among schoolchildren, essay competitions on road safety are organized. More than 43,000 drivers are being trained through NGOs and local institutions under the scheme of refresher training for heavy-vehicle drivers in the unorganized sector. Awards have also been instituted at various levels to recognize important contributions made to road safety.

The linkage between poverty and underdevelopment on the one hand and road safety on the other has been underlined by the Secretary-General in his earlier reports. The Secretary-General's report this year (A/60/181) identifies a number of strategies and policies that could contribute to a decrease in road crashes. One aspect that could be studied in this regard is the aspect of punishment for rash and negligent driving. While this issue falls purely in the framework of national jurisdiction, WHO could make an assessment of the need for advocacy in that regard.

The report states that the international community must take the lead by assisting countries in identifying road safety interventions that have been shown to be effective and in implementing them in their own countries in a manner that is appropriate to each cultural setting. That cannot be done in a purely mechanical manner.

Given this scenario, the imperative for increasing international cooperation to assist developing countries to effectively address issues of road safety cannot be overemphasized. We appreciate the efforts being made in that regard through the World Health Organization. We would like also to acknowledge the work done by the regional commissions of the United Nations, particularly the Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific.

We note from the report that initiatives have been envisaged to assist developing countries on road safety, including by the World Bank. However, we note also that mobilizing resources remains a concern for many organizations involved in global and national road safety efforts, as the level of funding targeted at reducing road traffic injuries is far from commensurate with the scale of the problem.

Further international cooperation needs to extend beyond the development of international instruments or the universalization of standards that may have been developed in one region. We are particularly satisfied that the resolution to be adopted today recognizes the importance of supporting the developing countries in building capacities in the field of road safety and providing them with financial and technical support for their efforts.

Mr. Xie Bohua (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for transmitting the report of the World Health Organization (WHO) on the global road safety crisis (*A/60/181*). We also thank the Government of Oman for its contribution in promoting consideration of the issue by the General Assembly. We are pleased to once again be a sponsor of the draft resolution proposed by Oman.

Road traffic injuries have become an ever more serious public health problem. Every year nearly 1.2 million people die and 50 million more are injured or disabled as a result of road accidents, which cause losses of more than $500 billion, including approximately $65 billion in developing countries, twice the amount those countries receive yearly in official development assistance. According to WHO projections, unless effective measures are taken, by 2020 road traffic injuries could rank third among the threats to human health, with serious economic and social consequences for all nations, particularly the developing countries. Reducing road traffic accidents is important for poverty eradication, the reduction of child mortality and sustainable development and should receive great attention from the international community.

In the process of developing road transport, many countries will go through a period with high rates of road traffic accidents. The main reason is that during rapid economic development the conditions of road transport and its management, as well as human behaviour, often cannot adapt to the rapid increase of motorized vehicles. That phenomenon can be considered a frustrating by-product of economic development.

However, as rightly pointed out by the WHO *World report on road traffic injury prevention*, road traffic injuries can largely be prevented and controlled through rational analysis and counter-measures. Countries should make joint efforts to improve road safety by exchanging experiences, learning from one another, and applying best practices. As a result of economic development constraints, developing countries tend to suffer far greater losses due to road traffic injuries than do developed countries. There is an urgent need to improve the infrastructure and management of road transport in developing countries. The international community should provide more assistance in terms of funding, technology and training.

China's sustained economic development has also brought significant developments in its road construction. China now has 30,000 kilometres of highways, and the number of privately owned vehicles continues to grow. At the same time, China is among those countries prone to road traffic accidents, especially serious accidents with heavy casualties. The underlying causes for that problem are scant awareness of road safety laws and regulations, poor road conditions and traffic environment and inadequate management.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to road traffic safety. Its Road Traffic Safety Act came into force on 1 May 2004. With the primary objective of human safety, the new law institutionalizes various preventive measures by making them legal requirements. As a result of its implementation, numerous positive results have already been achieved over the past year. In 2004, there were 567,753 road traffic accidents in China, causing 99,217 deaths, 451,810 injuries and 2.77 billion yuan in direct property losses. Compared with 2003, the year 2004 saw a significant 14.9 per cent reduction in road traffic accidents, a 4.9 per cent decline in fatalities, an 8.6 per cent drop in injuries and a 17.6 per cent decrease in property losses. Its record low fatality rate in 2004 of 9.2 deaths per 10,000 cars placed China, for the first time, among countries with a single-digit fatality rate. We are convinced that through the joint efforts of the Chinese Government and people, significant improvements will continue to be achieved in road safety in China.

Mr. Maksimychev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation attaches great importance to the question of ensuring traffic and road safety and welcomes this discussion in the General Assembly. We believe that the United Nations should play an increasingly important role in the development and coordination of multilateral cooperation in this area. It is particularly important to pool the experiences of countries to analyse the trends, the causes and the consequences of road traffic accidents in order to articulate strategies and recommendations to enhance public awareness, as well as to provide technical, expert and, where necessary, financial assistance in order to enhance that potential.

It is of key importance to further develop and improve the relevant international and national legal instruments. In that context, we very much appreciate the report of the Secretary-General (*A/60/181*) on progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 58/289. We believe that it contains a very useful survey of the steps taken by the United Nations system in the area of road safety.

On the whole, we support the conclusions and the recommendations contained in the report. We believe that the creation of the Working Party on Road Traffic

Safety as part of the United Nations system was a timely measure. On the whole, we agree with the mandate of the Working Party as set forth in the report. We commend its activities and expect that it will come up with further concrete, practical results.

It is important that the World Health Organization continue its successful coordinating activities on road safety issues in the United Nations system.

We also believe that the United Nations regional economic commissions play an important role in helping to promote road safety. We commend the active work of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), which deals with a total of 11 international conventions and protocols that regulate traffic rules, road signs and signals and questions relating to the state of road transport infrastructure.

On 20 September this year, the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety and the Inland Transport Committee of the ECE, under the chairmanship of the Russian Federation, decided on amendments to the 1968 Vienna Conventions on Road Traffic, Road Signs and Signals. In accordance with established procedures, those amendments will come into force for the parties to the Conventions on 28 March 2006. We believe that what is being accomplished by the Working Party is a very successful example of specific, multilaterally agreed practical measures aimed at improving international legal norms in the area of road safety. We believe that the implementation of those measures at the national level by the parties to the Convention will help to reduce the number of accidents and injuries on the roads.

We are convinced that, in spite of the importance of international cooperation in the area of road safety, the responsibility for reducing the number of traffic accidents and injuries ultimately lies with national Governments and with municipal and local authorities. In the Russian Federation, we have taken steps at all levels of authority to reduce the number of road accidents. We are carrying out planned efforts to improve our legislation in this area, particularly by strengthening the laws establishing responsibility for traffic law violations.

In Russia, we are actively exploring and implementing the most effective ways to reduce the social and economic consequences of accidents. At the federal and regional levels, we are elaborating comprehensive measures aimed at ensuring transport safety, preventing accidents involving children in schools and preschools, improving the traffic flow in cities and bringing public transport technologically up to date. We are also cooperating with the United Nations Development Programme in this area.

Those measures have thus far yielded positive results. In the first half of this year, there have been 5.4 per cent fewer fatal accidents, 16.8 per cent fewer accidents caused by drunk driving and 4.7 per cent fewer accidents caused by pedestrians compared with the same period in 2004.

In conclusion, we would like to express our gratitude to the delegation of Oman for its efforts to prepare the draft resolution A/60/L.8, entitled "Improving global road safety", which was agreed upon in informal consultations. The Russian Federation supports the draft resolution and has become a sponsor.

Mr. Boonpracong (Thailand): First of all, I wish to express my delegation's appreciation of the fact that the issue of global road safety has once again been given the attention it deserves. Each year, nearly 1.2 million people die and millions more are injured or disabled as a result of road accidents, despite increasing awareness concerning that preventable scourge. I also wish to express my delegation's appreciation to the Director-General of the World Health Organization for his eminent role as coordinator of road safety, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his report on this agenda item (*A/60/181*) and to the Permanent Representative of Oman for his continuing work and for his relentless efforts throughout the process of preparing the draft resolution before us.

In the statement by my delegation at the 84th meeting of the fifty-eighth session, we highlighted the importance of concerted efforts and commitments at all levels. Therefore, it is highly encouraging that since our discussion of this issue in April 2004, considerable progress has been achieved in mobilizing much-needed international support and broader involvement on the part of all stakeholders.

In that regard, Thailand welcomes in particular the establishment of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration, which has already held two consecutive meetings, and commends its useful work on the online global road safety legislation database as well as its ongoing cooperation with its partners to produce a series of "how to" manuals that will provide guidance

to countries on how to implement some of the recommendations identified in the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*.

My delegation also notes with appreciation the efforts of the Economic Commission for Europe Working Party on Road Traffic Safety to revise the consolidated resolutions on road traffic and on road signs and signals. What makes that exercise noteworthy is the fact that it takes into account the situations in as many countries as possible so that the resolutions can be implemented throughout the world. It is our earnest hope that those revisions will be a useful tool for both parties and non-parties to the 1968 Conventions on Road Traffic and Road Signs and Signals.

The Royal Thai Government attaches great importance and thus accords high priority to the issue of road safety, because we suffer tremendous losses in terms of human lives, property and human capacity as a result of road accidents each year. In December 2003, traffic injury prevention was declared a national objective. We are also concerned about the increasing number of accidents involving young drivers and drunk drivers, which are alarmingly frequent.

In that regard, the Road Safety Operations Centre of Thailand, with cooperation from the media and the public health community, has imposed a partial ban on television alcohol advertising between the broadcasting times of 5 a.m. and 10 p.m. The Centre has also succeeded in prohibiting athletes and celebrities — whose behaviour is always emulated by young people — from taking part in alcohol advertisements. Additional measures are the establishment of the "Don't Drive Drunk" task force and the implementation of traffic injury prevention programmes in school to promote public awareness of traffic injury prevention, especially among young people.

Another area of concern to my Government is the road-related death toll during festival periods, which has been particularly high during the new year festival and the traditional Thai new year festival in April. To tackle that problem, Thailand's Ministry of Public Health adopted several measures in 2003, including the establishment of a temporary rapid reporting system, the announcement of the numbers of road deaths and injuries during those festivals and the dissemination of that information through the mass media, as well as the allocation of additional financial resources to support police checkpoints during festivals.

When the campaign was first launched, the targeted reduction was not achieved, because during the 2003 festivals the death toll was only 1 per cent less than that in the previous year. Despite that discouraging result, however, the Thai Government remained relentless in its efforts and chose to adopt a new and even bolder strategy, called the "five E's" — namely, enforcement; engineering, which focuses on improving road conditions; education; emergency medical service; and evaluation and information. The number of road traffic deaths was reduced by 22.8 per cent during the traditional Thai new year in April 2004. The strategy was implemented again during the 2005 holidays, this time with more encouraging results, as the number was decreased by 25 per cent.

That experience reaffirmed our belief that consistent political commitment and strict enforcement of traffic laws at all levels, as well as public support and involvement, are critical if road safety initiatives are to have the intended results.

While close coordination and collaboration on the part of all relevant sectors of society at the national level have proved to be powerful tools in road accident prevention in Thailand, I am confident that far greater success can be collectively achieved at the international level with greater involvement and contributions by all stakeholders in the international community. Therefore, my delegation wishes to reiterate its appeal to all Member States to make their best efforts to tackle road safety problems. In particular, we would like to urge Member States, international organizations and regional commissions possessing expertise on road safety to continue sharing their best practices and knowledge and to provide technical and other necessary assistance to other countries that need it so as to supplement their endeavours in that regard.

For many countries, the lack of financial resources is a major obstacle to efforts to increase road safety. Mobilizing resources therefore remains a challenge which requires attention and action. In this regard, Thailand welcomes the study by the World Bank on the establishment of a global road safety facility, which aims to create a fund to support those areas of global road safety for which resources are limited. Another commendable effort is the global road

safety initiative, a partnership of seven private companies, launched in December 2004, which aims to reduce road traffic fatalities in developing countries. Thailand believes that that is an area where partnership is still required and should be further strengthened, with the full involvement of all sectors of society at all levels, if we want global road safety to be a truly global agenda, with global achievement for all.

Last but not least, my delegation wishes to support the recommendations made in the report before us which, first and foremost, remind us to reaffirm our commitments to addressing the global road safety crisis. As raising awareness is critical to maintaining the momentum generated by the global road safety events of 2004, Thailand supports the proposal to designate the third Sunday in November as the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, to organize jointly, through the United Nations regional commissions and the World Health Organization, the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week, and to convene, as a part thereof, a second Road Safety Stakeholders' Forum.

The recent developments highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General gives us hope. Given the growing awareness and commitment, and with the continued efforts of all, I am confident that global road safety is a goal that we all can attain.

Mr. Savua (Fiji): My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for having transmitted to the Assembly for consideration the report entitled "The global road safety crisis: progress on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 58/289". We also commend the efforts of the World Health Organization in carrying out consultations with partners and stakeholders and incorporating the findings and recommendations into the report for Member States to discuss.

The report tells us that about 1.2 million people die annually and millions more are injured or disabled as a result of road accidents. Most of those accidents occur in urban areas worldwide, and statistics show that accidents are more frequent in developing countries. The *World report on road traffic injury prevention*, launched last year, shows that road accidents are the second most common cause of death for people between the ages of 5 and 29, and the third most common cause of death for people between the ages of 30 and 44. People in the latter group, in particular, actively contribute to national economies, and such deaths result in loss of income for their families and loss of skills and labour for the national labour market. The global economic costs of road traffic injuries amount to approximately $518 billion per year, of which $110 billion is borne by developing countries.

The report forecasts that there will be an 80 per cent increase in traffic fatalities in low- and middle-income countries by 2020 if preventive measures are not taken immediately. For Fiji, casualties sustained in road traffic accidents increased by 9 per cent in 2004, as compared with 2003, while fatalities remained constant during the same period. In this regard, we acknowledge the work of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration, whose main goal is to facilitate international cooperation among United Nations agencies and other international partners to implement General Assembly resolution 58/289 and the recommendations of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention* in support of national road safety programmes.

My delegation believes that more can be done, provided that funds are available for national programmes and initiatives to be implemented. The road traffic accident data report plays a major role in the road safety planning and action of major stakeholders in Fiji. Major development plans have been based on the report. The effectiveness of the measures that are in place, as well as those yet to be implemented, can be evaluated through the maintenance of proper traffic accident data records. The Fiji Police Microcomputer Accident Analysis Package (MAAP) has maintained such data since 1994. The MAAP was made possible by funds provided by the Asian Development Bank.

In the past few years, there has been an increase in the number of vehicles operating in Fiji. That has put a tremendous strain on our roads, which has been exacerbated by high rainfall, flooding and landslides. Consequently, there has been a related increase in the number of road accidents and casualties. Road maintenance and upgrades cost the Government $25 million annually. In this regard, we welcome the initiative of the World Bank to look into the establishment of a global road safety facility, which would help to create funds in support of developing countries' road safety plans.

Fiji has a programme in place to resolve road safety problems which we hope will address the factors that have been identified in the Secretary-General's report as reducing the risk of traffic-related injuries. The programme, which has a number of strategic focus areas, will assist road users in curbing road accidents.

The focus on safer roads will enable us to deal with the need to improve road design, construction and management. This includes the adoption of safety promoting designs, construction, rehabilitation and upgrading procedures in land-use planning and improvements in road networks. Those are regarded as basic prerequisites to tackle the road safety problem in Fiji. Greater emphasis is placed on the safety of road users and the provision of appropriate facilities to improve their safety status.

Our policy is geared towards safer driving focuses on driver testing and training, and emphasizes the responsibility of both drivers and passengers. As a result, more effective methods of driver training, including compulsory training courses for beginners and improved defensive driving techniques designed to improve drivers' ability to perceive and avoid risks, have been introduced.

The focus on the safety of vehicles addresses the need for effective control of vehicle design, construction, operation and maintenance standards. It also addresses the means by which such standards can be implemented in order to reduce the adverse effect of poor vehicle conditions on road users and on road infrastructure. We have established an enforcement regime for appropriate vehicle safety standards so as to promote increased responsibility with regard to importing, selling and operating unsafe or non-road-worthy vehicles and to fostering vehicle safety.

In our statement last year, we mentioned that children are more vulnerable and more prone to road accidents. In Fiji children aged 15 and younger accounted for 16 per cent of total casualties and 19 per cent of fatalities. For that reason, a lot of emphasis has been placed on children's traffic education in pre-schools, primary schools and secondary schools so as to inculcate traffic safety awareness in children. We also include tertiary education so as to ensure that safety awareness can be raised among future teachers, technicians, engineers and planners, who will be contributing to infrastructure development in Fiji.

The main cause of traffic accidents is human error. That can be rectified through the dissemination of information through training, capacity-building and the provision of resources so as to facilitate the implementation of internationally agreed conventions and resolutions. We welcome the proposal for the first United Nations global Road Safety Week in 2007, which will target young road users. My delegation also supports the call to designate the third Sunday in November as the World Day of Remembrance of Road Traffic Victims in memory of the victims and the loss and suffering sustained by their families.

Road safety is everyone's responsibility and we must all play our part to support this global cause for the sake of present and future generations.

Mr. Wee (Malaysia): Let me begin by expressing our appreciation to the World Health Organization (WHO) for presenting a thorough and comprehensive report on global road safety (*A/60/181*) with its long list of recommendations. The report provides us with useful information, especially on the activities that have been undertaken following the adoption of resolution 58/289 in April 2004.

We are pleased to learn about the creation of the international road safety organization known as the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration. We are also encouraged by the participation of many United Nations agencies, including UNICEF, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme and the World Bank, as well other non-governmental bodies and donors, in the initiative. That is reflective of the broad support and attention given to the need to tackle the question of road safety.

It is very disturbing to be reminded that road traffic injuries continue to pose a major public health problem and are a leading cause of death in many countries, especially in the developing world. The fact that every year an average of 1.2 million people die and millions more are injured or disabled, mostly in urban areas of developing countries, should be a matter of grave concern to all of us. Such grim statistics definitely demand urgent attention and concerted efforts by the international community aimed at tackling and reversing the situation, as road traffic injuries are largely preventable.

The destructive and multi-dimensional impact of deaths, injuries and disabilities on the economic and social well-being of our societies is well documented and needs no further elaboration. The loss of human life and the disabilities caused by road traffic accidents are hard to accept, especially knowing that they are preventable. It is even more devastating to look beyond the statistics of death and injuries to the traumatic and emotional impact of disabilities and the loss of life on family members of the victims. Road traffic accidents have generated enormous economic cost and placed a heavy burden on national health services, particularly those of developing countries.

The Government of Malaysia attaches serious attention to the problem of road traffic death and injury. Road accidents are one of the major causes of death and injury in Malaysia. Despite the many efforts undertaken by the Government to enhance road safety, over 300,000 cases of road traffic accidents were reported in 2004, compared with 290,000 cases in 2003, at an average of 895 accident cases per day in 2004 throughout the country. Those accidents resulted in the loss of 6,000 lives last year. This phenomenon is said to consume an estimated 6 billion Malaysian ringgit, or $1.5 billion, resulting from loss of productivity, medical costs, management costs and property damage, among others.

However, it has been noted that the fatality rate from accidents decreased to 17 per cent in 2004, compared to 2003. That decrease was largely attributed to the Government's unwavering efforts and its commitment to addressing the problem in the interest of saving lives.

Malaysia has indeed taken serious measures to improve road safety and reduce fatalities. In 2004, the Government placed the issue of road safety on the national agenda. Under that initiative and in order to give specific attention to road safety, a separate department for road safety was established in September 2004 to address the issue. The department was created to scrutinize all the efforts and activities on the part of Government agencies and non-governmental organizations in Malaysia and to formulate strategies and recommendations aimed at reducing road traffic accidents.

At the international and regional levels, Malaysia continues to be an active partner in the Global Road Safety Partnership under the aegis of the World Bank, the World Road Association, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Land Transport and Safety Committee, the Road Engineering Association of Asia and Australasia and the ASEAN sub-working group on road transport and road safety.

Malaysia welcomes the role of the United Nations, especially the initiative of the Assembly to relentlessly increase the awareness around the globe on the need to address the issue of road traffic fatalities as a global public health and a development problem. We support the involvement of the regional commissions, as well as other international agencies, to address the issue of road safety and assist national Governments in instituting measures aimed at enhancing road safety in their respective countries.

In that connection, we support many of the recommendations presented in the WHO report to the Assembly, which, we believe, will be able to contribute to the promotion of road safety, particularly in developing countries. We feel that the list of proposals and recommendations enumerated in the report was not exhaustive and that it would, therefore, be useful for Member States to continue to exchange ideas based on our respective experiences in dealing with the issue of road safety in our countries.

It is also important for the General Assembly to pay attention to the question of providing financial resources and technical assistance to the countries in need of such assistance in order to enable them to develop the necessary infrastructure to avoid or minimize road traffic accidents. Assistance is also needed to finance awareness campaigns among the population on road safety. Such assistance could, we believe, possibly save millions of lives and prevent unnecessary injuries.

Road safety is a very important issue that continues to affect each and every one of us in one way or another. Unfortunately, however, in many instances the issue has not been given due attention. Road traffic accidents are predictable and therefore preventable. In order to combat the problem, there needs to be close coordination and collaboration, using a holistic and integrated approach. Malaysia wishes to reiterate that the United Nations should continue to play a major role in addressing this highly preventable but deadly public safety issue.

Mr. Southcott (Australia): Australia recognizes the need for a strong international response to global

road trauma and is delighted to support the draft resolution. We also wish to acknowledge the important coordination role played by the World Health Organization and the valuable framework for road safety action provided by the Organization's global report on road traffic injury prevention (A/60/181).

Road safety has a high profile in Australia and is a prominent focus of public policy at all levels of Government. At the national level, we have a strategic approach that embraces many of the principles advocated in the global report, including setting challenging and measurable targets, monitoring outcomes, developing action plans based on thorough research and analysis and encouraging cross-sectoral cooperation.

The road toll in Australia is now one third of what it was in the 1960s. Over the last 35 years, the approaches that have been taken have included the mandatory use of seat belts and public education campaigns focusing on the dangers of drink driving, speed and fatigue in causing accidents. On public holidays, emergency workers and health professionals undertake a media campaign to make people aware of the particular dangers that occur during these periods, when great numbers of people take to the roads. The road infrastructure has been improved through greater use of overtaking lanes, and on certain highways such as dual-carriage freeways.

Australia's current goal is a 40 per cent reduction in the per capita fatality rate over the decade to 2010. We have taken a broad-based approach to our task, recognizing that substantial gains can only be achieved through a range of measures that address different parts of the road transport system.

For example, we have road investment strategies that accommodate both large road construction projects and highly targeted "black spot" projects. We are improving the safety of our vehicle fleet through long-term research and development programmes as well as ongoing consumer awareness campaigns, and we are encouraging safer road user behaviour through a combination of intensive enforcement efforts, graduated licensing arrangements and public education campaigns.

I am pleased to report that Australia has made good progress in the first four years of its 10-year strategy. Between 2000 and 2004, our national fatality rate declined by 17 per cent, well on track towards achieving our 2010 target. But maintaining the momentum is becoming increasingly difficult. There are already signs that we need to examine new ideas and adopt better practices if we are going to fulfil our objective.

Australia is keen to learn from the experiences of other countries. There is an enormous amount of road safety activity around the world and a great deal of accumulated knowledge to draw upon. We have always valued the opportunity to exchange information with our international colleagues and to collaborate on issues of common interest. We encourage others to take a similar view. In that context, Australia acknowledges and applauds the draft resolution's reaffirmed commitment to international cooperation on road safety.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the progress report on the implementation of resolution 58/289 (*A/60/181*). I would also like to pay tribute to Oman for its determination, over a number of years, in bringing attention to a serious threat to personal security in the world.

The seriousness of the issue is clear from the statistics. Nearly 1.2 million people die every year in traffic accidents — that figure is comparable to death rates from malaria or HIV/AIDS, as previous speakers have pointed out. At the same time, the solution to the problem involves, to a large extent, persuading motorists — many of us — to change our behaviour.

Iceland has taken seriously the recommendations of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*. Unlike many other countries, in Iceland the large majority of road accident fatalities do not occur in the city. Indeed, the accident rate in built-up areas has declined significantly over recent years, while three fourths of fatal accidents now occur in the countryside.

Studies have confirmed other findings that attribute road accidents to a number of key factors, including speeding, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, failure to use seat belts and poor infrastructure. In the light of that information, the Icelandic Ministry of Transport has developed a four-year road safety improvement strategy which started last spring.

Thirteen thousand kilometres of roads stretch across Iceland, which has a population of 300,000.

This means that resources need to be targeted carefully when improving road infrastructure. A cost-benefit system is thus used to assess where improvements are most urgent.

Last summer the Government of Iceland launched an initiative to reduce speeding and to improve seat belt use on rural highways. A contract was drawn up with the police to double their surveillance on those issues. In addition, special cameras were installed in certain police vehicles. The campaign was carried out from June to September, as that is the time when roads are busiest. First results from that initiative have been very positive. Average speed appears to have fallen — it is calculated that a drop of one kilometre per hour average speed means a 3 per cent drop in the accident rate.

The Icelandic authorities are now preparing a similar campaign against driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, which will be applied year round. Also in preparation is the establishment of a network of automatic speed cameras, a longer-term project that requires both technical preparation and possibly new legislation.

We know that the deaths of 1.2 million individuals, however tragic, are only the tip of the iceberg of suffering caused by traffic accidents. Traffic accidents have a major economic impact on many families and thus on many national economies. Iceland is again proud to be a sponsor of the draft resolution, A/60/L.8, introduced earlier today by my friend, Ambassador Fuad Al-Hinai.

Mr. Suárez Salvia (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Argentine delegation has followed the leadership of the Sultanate of Oman through its Mission here in the United Nations in the Organization's consideration of the topic of road safety. As the statistics reveal, the phenomenon remains a genuine public health crisis and affects, in particular, the most vulnerable populations in developing countries.

There is an alarming projection by the World Health Organization that shows that if we do not urgently act jointly, on a global level, by the year 2020, road accidents may be the third cause of death and disability, along with malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. Many studies from different perspectives have tried to promote and encourage greater cooperation, innovation and commitment to improve road safety throughout the world. While the factors involved in road safety are many, all those studies coincide in highlighting human, mechanical and infrastructure causes as crucial.

It is true that many sectors have an important part to play in preventing deaths or injury caused by traffic accidents; hence the need to work together with civil society, the private sector and the academic community. When a lack of skill, imprudence or fate takes a life, that reminds us that in spite of the progress achieved by collectively tackling the issue of road safety, both within and outside the United Nations system, the issue is still far from being considered a fully accomplished task.

Funding to reduce injuries caused by traffic accidents is not commensurate with the scope of the problem and is generally not enough to carry out the necessary awareness campaigns or set up the required machinery to supervise, evaluate and monitor results.

As stated in paragraph 2 of the report of the Secretary-General (*A/60/181*),

> "The international community must take the lead by assisting countries in identifying road safety interventions that have been shown to be effective and in implementing them in their own countries in a manner that is appropriate to each cultural setting".

In my country, Argentina, each province can, in accordance with a constitutional mandate, draft its own traffic legislation. In order to avoid overlapping of standards among the provinces, the National Congress, where the provinces are represented at the Senate level, enacted the National Traffic Law in 1995, supported by all the provinces. This law serves as a legal context and empowers the national authorities to exercise control in traffic matters exclusively on national roads with regard to all matters related to the physical structure, maintenance, control of concessions and permissible carrying weights. Local authorities — provincial or municipal — exercise direct control over all other aspects related to road traffic.

The substantial and active participation of Argentine civil society in this field — its contribution is very broad-ranging and important — is chiefly channelled through road traffic education at all levels.

The fact that this forum has decided to discuss this issue and that the number of sponsors in support of

the draft resolution keeps increasing shows the considerable acceptance by the Member States of the fact that, if we are to find a solution to this crisis, good will and commitment at the political level are indispensable.

The part States will play at all levels is crucial to achieve road safety. We support this draft resolution and the various recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General (document A/60/181) in order to accelerate the implementation throughout the world of activities relating to road safety. If we follow these recommendations, we might save more than five million lives over the next 15 years.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/60/L.8, entitled "Improving global road safety".

Before proceeding to take this decision, I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of A/60/L.8: Belgium, France, Jamaica, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar and Yemen.

Mr. Al-Humaimidi (Iraq): My delegation would like to join in the sponsorship of draft resolution A/60/L.8.

Ms. Davtyan (Armenia): I would just like to note that my delegation also wishes to join the list of sponsors for this draft resolution.

Mrs. Pinto Lopes D'Alva (Guinea-Bissau): Our delegation would like to join the list of sponsors for draft resolution A/60/L.8.

Mr. Filgueiras Rivero (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our delegation would also like to add its name to the list of sponsors of the draft resolution.

The Acting President: I would now request the delegations concerned to approach the Secretariat and sign the necessary forms.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/60/L.8?

Mr. Suárez Salvia (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before taking action on the draft resolution, I would like to make a few amendments to the Spanish version, with your permission.

The Acting President: I would request the representative of Argentina to approach the Secretariat to submit in the amendments.

May I take it that the Assembly is now ready to adopt draft resolution A/60/L.8?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 60/5).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is now the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 60?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.